Prices of Rice, Ragi, Jola and Wheat

Q.—776. **Sri S. GOPALA GOWDA** (Sagar-Hosanagar).—

Will the Government be pleased to state :—

(*a*) the index of prices of rice, ragi, jola and wheat from January 1956 up-to-date, recorded in the markets of the State every month ;

(*b*) what was the price fixed by the Government for the above foodgrains during the last harvest ;

(*c*) whether they have purchased any foodgrains during the current year to maintain a buffer stock ;

(*d*) whether they have taken any steps to check the growing increase in the price of foodgrains ?

A.— **Sri H. SIDDAVEERAPPA** (Minister for Home and Finance).—

(*a*) A statement showing the free market prices of rice, ragi, jola and wheat in Bangalore since January 1956 is appended below.

(*b*) No price was fixed by Government during the last harvest.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) "The Price Stabilisation Scheme for Rice" formulated by the Government of India is being made use of in the Mysore State also to check the increase in the price of rice.

Statement showing the free market prices of rice, ragi and jola in Bangalore since January 1956 (price per palla).

Bangalore	Rice		Ragi	Jola	Wheat
	I	II			
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
January 1956 (16-1-56)	50 to 67	33 to 40	17 to 22	20 to 25	41 0 to 46 0
February ,, (11-2-56)	44 to 67	31 to 40	17 to 22	20 to 25	46 8 to 47 12
March ,, (10-3-56)	50 to 67	36 to 44	17 to 22	20 to 25	46 8 to 47 12
April ,, (14-4-56)	57 to 73	40 to 50	20 to 24	20 to 22	43 4 to 47 12
May ,, (19-5-56)	57 to 73	44 to 50	20 to 24	20 to 24	Do
June ,, (16-6-56)	57 to 73	40 to 50	25 to 29	29 to 33	Do
July ,, (14-7-56)	60 to 70	50 to 58	26½ to 28	34 to 38	Do
August ,, (11-8-56)	61 to 74	50 to 60	27 to 29	34 to 38	Do
September,, (10-9-56)	64 to 72	58 to 62	29 to 32	34 to 38	Do

State Cotton Committee Election results.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Chair desires to announce that for the election of a member to the State Cotton Committee notice of only one nomination had been received till the last hour fixed for this purpose and I therefore declare Sri A. Bheemappa Naik duly elected to the Committee.

Papers Laid on the Table

Sri H. SIDDAVEERAPPA (Minister for Home and Finance).—Sir, I present the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Appropriation Accounts 1952-53 and 1953-54 and Audit Reports 1954 and 1955 and Finance Accounts 1952-53, 1953-54 and Audit Reports 1953 and 1954.

Sir, I beg to lay on the table the copy of the Finance Accounts 1954-55 and the Audit Report 1955.

Statement by Minister re. Food Position in the State

Sri H. SIDDAVEERAPPA (Minister for Home and Finance).—Sir, with your permission I would like to make a

brief statement regarding the food position in the State.

At the beginning of the year 1954-55 Government had in their possession about 1,12,208 pallas of rice, all of which were from the old crop and 4,43,437 pallas of paddy of which nearly one lakh and ten thousand pallas were from the old crop. As a result of complete decontrol of rice within the State and availability of large stocks in the open market, the offtakes in Government Depots had dwindled considerably, and there was no prospect of clearance of these stocks within a reasonable time. Rice Mill owners also began to urge for the clearance of rice stocks as well as for permission to hull the old paddy still with them apprehending risk of lower iluvaris and losses due to deterioration. Hence the Government of Mysore negotiated with the Central Government for the purchase of about two lakhs of pallas of rice, which was completed by September 1955. The delivery of this rice amounting to 2,75,000 pallas of the value of nearly a crore of rupees was completed by September 1955. Owing to this deal the State Government avoided heavy loss on this account which would otherwise have resulted.

Price Support Scheme.—Since July 1954 there was as a consequence of decontrol, a gradual fall in the prices of foodgrains. In view of the favourable seasonal conditions and timely rains at the end of December 1955, the slump in prices became pronounced. In fact the crops of paddy, ragi and jola were so good as to raise an apprehension that the prices of these crops might decline further. The Government of India therefore considered it necessary that the prices of rice and millets should not be allowed to decline further to uneconomic levels, and in order to safeguard the interests of the producers, they sponsored a scheme of 'price support for paddy/rice and jola.' Under this scheme the Government of India agreed to purchase common medium and coarse varieties of rice at Rs. 11 per maund at railheads, if the price of rice fell below Rs. 11 per maund, and jola at Rs. 5-8-0 per maund.

The Government of India extended the price support scheme to jola, but did not accept the State Government's proposal to extend it to ragi.

The prices of none of these foodgrains fell below the prescribed floor prices, and hence the need for making purchases under this scheme did not arise.

Price Stabilisation Scheme for Rice.

On the contrary the slump in prices was followed by a swing of the price pendulum in the reverse direction, and by about June 1956 it was found that the prices in the markets had risen to abnormal levels and showed a further upward trend, though such a rise was unwarranted by the supply position which was quite satisfactory. Besides this the failure of monsoon rains in parts of the Mysore and Mandya Districts and the consequent adverse seasonal conditions further aggravated the situation. The Government immediately initiated measures to afford relief to the distressed persons in the affected areas.

In spite of the relief works undertaken the prices did not however show any indication of coming down, but on the other hand the further upward trend was observed. As a result of conferences with the Deputy Minister for Food, Sri Krishnappa, Government of India, a stock of about 30,000 pallas of first variety dehusked rice which was available at the time in the Central Government Godown at Bangalore was arranged to be delivered to the State Government at Rs. 14 per maund (inclusive of gunny) ex-Godown, for being moved to the distressed areas in the Mysore District and released through Co-operative Societies and Works Agencies at 3 seers per rupee. About 20,000 pallas of rice of this quality has been moved to Mysore so far.

In order to make rice available to the public at reasonable prices, an agreement was arrived at with the Central Government that 50,000 pallas of first variety rice should be allotted to this State in the first instance and released at Rs. 16 per maund (inclusive of gunny) in the Cities of Bangalore, Mysore, K.G.F. and Davanagere. The issues in Banga-

(SRI H. SIDDAVEERAPPA.)

lore started in July 1956 itself and so far 22,300 pallas have been distributed. The distribution started through the Co-operative Societies and registered associations number 33 in the first instance, and was thereafter followed by the opening of more depots by the Bangalore Corporation. The Corporation have already opened 19 depots and are in the process of enhancing the number to 50 in the near future. This will altogether bring the number of distribution centres to 80 in the Corporation area which is expected to be adequate for the supply of rice to all persons in the Corporation area.

In addition to the Corporation area, a number of distribution centres have been arranged by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, round about Bangalore city, and distribution has been taking place through 51 centres and a total quantity of 5,622 pallas has been distributed. All the depots are being promptly and adequately fed. The number of distribution centres having thus been adequately provided, there is no need at present for entrusting the distribution to private agencies.

Following the distribution in Bangalore City, arrangements have been made through the Central Government for the opening of their godowns in the other three main Cities in the State *i.e.*, Mysore, K.G.F. and Davangere. Adequate supplies of rice are being made to these centres also, and 157 Societies and institutions have been distributing rice for the people in these areas and have so far distributed a quantity of 15,618 pallas of rice. Arrangements have been made for the regular flow of rice to all the godowns and the Government of India have assured the supply of whatever quantity that may be required by the State. In all 260 distribution centres have now been functioning in the State, and have issued so far a total quantity of 45,370 pallas of rice.

The Government of India are being urgedt o open at least another godown at Kadur in order to cater to the needs of the people of Chikmagalur, Shimoga and Hassan Districts. Pending the opening of these godowns, however, arrangements are being made to supply adequate quantities of rice regularly to all the other district headquarters where the respective Deputy Commissioners have arranged for the issue of first variety rice at 2 seers per rupee.

Second variety rice is also being issued by the Central Government from their godown at Bangalore and is being issued to the public at 2½ seers per rupee in all the distribution centres. Negotiations with the Central Government are actively proceeding to supply this variety of rice also to all the other districts.

It will thus be seen that the Government have been taking prompt measures, in consultation with the Central Government, for the alleviation of pistress caused to the people by the high prices of rice. But as regards millets, the crops of which failed in several areas during two consecutive years, it has not been possible to obtain millets from anywhere since they are not available. Hence, as an alternative measure, rice and wheat are being released for distribution in adequate quantities to meet this deficiency, in addition to the supply of 30,000 pallas dehusked first variety rice in the distress areas at a subsidised rate at 3 seers per rupee.

During the initial periods of rice distribution, there was an unfavourable reaction from the public on account of the bad quality rice received from Central Government in some places. This has now been fully rectified and the Central Government have agreed to despatch and to issue only very good quality of rice which is already being received and distributed in all the main areas.

It may perhaps be remarked in this connection that the essential foodgrains have at no time been in short supply during the period of inflation between the month of June and now. This appears to be curious and appears to indicate that there are other causes contributing to the rise in the prices of foodgrains. This is also borne out by the rising index of prices in certain other articles of essential necessity like cloth, edible oils, ghee, etc. This is a matter which is already engaging the active attention of the Union Government.

However, it may be said that the release of rice on a large scale has had some effect on the price levels which appeared to touch an almost all-time high level, the price of fine rice having shot up to between Rs. 70 and Rs. 75 per palla. The prices are now ranging from Rs. 55 to Rs. 65 per palla in different areas and it appears to be reasonable to expect further fall as the State system of distribution gains momentum and popularity which is to be expected by reason of the release of only good quality rice in all the areas.

A word of warning to the trading classes, appears, however to be relevant. It appears to be clear that the prices are being maintained artificially at a high level though there is no shortage of stocks as such. Government, therefore, wish to appeal to the mercantile community to co-operate with Government in this vital matter and to release their stocks not only of rice but also of millets at reasonable prices.

While Government have no desire to revert to the system of stringent control again, it may become unavoidable for them to adopt some stringent measures if the prices of essential foodgrains do not drop to a reasonable level within a short period of time and they may be compelled to take action under the Essential Supplies Act and Hoarding and Profiteering Order. But it is their devout hope that the concerned classes will not allow Government to adopt such measures, which they would have to take only with the utmost reluctance.

Government wish to assure the House that they are keenly watching the situation and will not hesitate to take all steps necessary to ensure adequate supplies of foodgrains to the people at fairly reasonable prices.

*Sri J. MOHAMED IMAM (Jagalur).—May I know if the copies of the Hon'ble Minister's statement would be made available or going to be distributed? Most of us are anxious to discuss that statement and offer our views especially in view of the fact, that in the course of his statement he stated that 'if necessary we will have recourse to stringent measures'. Thatis rather unfortunate and there is no need to make that statement. Therefore I presume that the Government is in a distressing mood and it is better if the statement is thrown open for discussion and we given an opportunity to speak on that.

*Sri Mulka GOVINDA REDDY (Chitaldrug).—We support what has been said by Sri Imam. I request the Chair to fix a day and time when a debate on the Food Minister's statement will be taken up.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is left to the Leader of the House to lay it on the Table or distribute copies to members. If they want any discussion on that matter we will consider it.

Sri Mulka GOVINDA REDDY.—It is of such vital importance that a discussion is desirable.

Sri H. SIDDAVEERAPPA.—I would appeal to the Hon'ble House that a situation has not arisen as to have a debate, for this reason. We have faced graver problems so far as food is concerned. It is my intention that we should not create an impression in the minds of the public that there is something wrong and that a terribel thing has happened. Excepting the fact that prices have gone up a little, no extraordinary situation has arisen. I do not think whether it is possible to raise a debate on the statement I made. In pursuance of an assurance made by the Revenue Minister on Monday that a statement will be made regarding the food position in the State I have read out a statement. More meaning need not be read into the statement than what it contains. There are already two Acts, *viz.*, Essential Supplies Act and Hoarding and Profiteering Order. If necessary nothing prevents the Government to have recourse to suchaction as they deem necessary.

Sri J. MOHAMED IMAM.—Apart from this, I would like to have a ruling from the Chair. When the Minister makes a statement, I think the House should have the right to discuss that statement and that privilege cannot be curtailed.

Sri Kadidal MANJAPPA (Chief Minister). —Under what rule my learned friend wants this to be discussed ?

Sri J. MOHAMED IMAM.—The statement is made by the Minister. So, this House is apprised of the situation. So, this House acquires the knowledge of it and a right to debate on that statement. We can agree with the Minister or reject or censure the statement made by the Minister. That privilege is vested in this House.

Sri H. SIDDAVEERAPPA.—In pursuance of the request made in the House I read out the statement. That is all.

Sri J. MOHAMED IMAM.—All requests are made in the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is no convention. The statements made are not discussed. If there is necessity and if it is very urgent and the situation is acute on some such occasions discussion is open. It is left to the Government to ascertain the views of the House.

Sri Mulka GOVINDA REDDY.—We request you to permit adebate to take place during the course of this session. Many of us have seen that when important statements are made by the Prime Minister in the Parliament they are being discussed.

***Sri Kadidal MANJAPPA.**—It all depends upon the question whether we have sufficient time to discuss this. As rightly pointed out by my colleague, the Home Minister, there is nothing to discuss on this statement. He has categorically stated that the Government is prepared to supply any quantity of rice and that we are prepared to open new depots wherever necessary. There is nothing more to be discussed. In view of the fact that we should not create any impression that all is not well with regard to food position, I do not think there is any necessity for any debate. It does not mean that we do not want to take into confidence the members of this House. It is all a question of time.

1-30 P.M.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Not only is it a question of time, but it also becomes a bad precedent and if you insist upon discussion at each step on such statements, it may induce Government not to make such statements hereafter.

*ಶ್ರೀ ಎಸ್. ಗೋಪಾಲಗೌಡ.—(ಸಾಗರ ಹೊಸನಗರ).—ಸ್ವಾಮಿ,

ಆಹಾರ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯಮೇಲೆ ಮಾನ್ಯ ಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳು ಒಂದು ಹೇಳಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಕೊಡಬೇಕೆಂದು ಶ್ರೀಮಾನ್ ಕೆ. ಪಟ್ಟಾಭಿರಾಮ್‌ರವರು ಕೇಳಿದ್ದರ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಒಂದು ಹೇಳಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇದಲ್ಲದೆ ಕೆಲವು ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಕಿ ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ಉತ್ತರಗಳನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರದವರಿಂದ ಪಡೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಆದರೆ ಸರ್ಕಾರದವರು ಈ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಅವರ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ನೋಡಿ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಚರ್ಚೆ ಮಾಡುವುದು ನೂಕ್ತವಲ್ಲವೆಂಬ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯವನ್ನು ವ್ಯಕ್ತಪಡಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಅವರ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯವನ್ನೇ ಈ ಸಭೆಯ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯವೆಂದು ನಾನು ಒಪ್ಪುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ. ನಮ್ಮ ಸಲಹೆಗಳನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಅಥವಾ ಈ ವಿಚಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಚರ್ಚೆ ಮಾಡುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಕಲ್ಪಿಸಿಕೊಡಬೇಕು. ಇನೊ ಂದು ವಿಷಯವೇನೆಂದರೆ, ಮಾನ್ಯ ಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂಥ ಅಭಾವ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಏನೂ ಉದ್ಭವಿಸಿಲ್ಲವೆಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಅದು ಹೇಗೆ ಕಾಣುತ್ತದೆಂಬುದನ್ನು ನಾನು ಹೇಳುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಆಹಾರವಿಲ್ಲದ ಅನೇಕ ಸಂಸಾರಗಳಿವೆ. ಅಂಥ ಮನೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊರಗೆ ಹೋದಾಗ.....

Sri Kadidal MANJAPPA.—I never intended to create that impression, Sir.

ಶ್ರೀ ಎಸ್. ಗೋಪಾಲಗೌಡ —ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಆಹಾರವಿಲ್ಲವೆನ್ನುವ ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು ಹೊರಗೆ ಹೇಳಬಾರದೆಂದು ತಮ್ಮ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಅವರ ತಂದೆ ತಾಯಿಗಳು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ರೊಟ್ಟಿಯನ್ನೋ, ಗಂಜಿಯನ್ನೋ ಕೊಟ್ಟು, ಯಾರ ಮನೆಗೂ ಹೋಗಕೂಡದು, ಯಾರನ್ನೂ ಕೇಳಕೂಡದು ಎಂದು ಎಚ್ಚರಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಆ ರೀತಿ ನಮ್ಮ ಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯವೂ ಇದ್ದಹಾಗೆ ಕಾಣುತ್ತದೆ.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have already said that no discussion can take place on this statement. If you want a discussion then you can table a motion under our Rules of Procedure and I will consider it.

OFFICIAL RESOLUTION ON CONSTITUTION (SEVENTH AMENDMENT) BILL, 1956.

Sri Kadidal MANJAPPA (Chief Minister).—With your permission, I would like to move:

> "That this House ratifies the amendments proposed to be made to the Constitution of India by the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Bill, 1956, as passed by the two Houses of Parliament."

Sri K. S. VASAN (Kolar Gold Fields).—Are we not resuming further consideration of the Essential Services Bill? I have already discussed with the concerned Minister; while introducing the amending Bill, he has also suggested that it was the most important amend-